

W. S. 1.129

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRE MILITAIRA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 1.129

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1.129

Witness

Moses Roche,
"Sancta Maria",
Ballytruckle,
Waterford.

Identity.

Captain Kilmacthomas Company,
West Waterford Brigade.

Subject.

Kilmacthomas Company West Waterford Brigade,
1917-1923.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

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ORIGINAL

STATEMENT OF MOSES ROCHE

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MELEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,129

"Sancta Maria", Ballytruckle, Waterford.

I was born in Doonane, Co. Leix, on 25.11.1900. My father, who was a native of Co. Cork, was an R.I.C. constable in Doonane at the time of my birth, and my mother was a Waterford woman.

On my father resigning from the R.I.C. in 1906, I moved with the family to Waterford in that year where I attended the local De La Salle Christian Brothers' School. I played the customary Gaelic games when at school and, at the age of 17, I went to the Waterford Technical School where I studied a commercial course.

During the first World War 1914-18, I obtained employment as a machinist in the local munition factory, where ammunition for the British Government, then at war with Germany, was being made. In 1917, I was called to a job on the railway and took up duty as a stationmaster's clerk in the Coaching Department of the then Great Southern and Western Railway - Waterford Branch.

After the insurrection of 1916 - probably early in 1917 - I joined the local unit of Fianna Éireann, the officers of which were Tom McDonald, O/C., Paddy Hearne, James O'Connor, Nicholas Brennan and a man named Walsh. It was as a member of the Fianna that I got my first insight into the significance of the struggle for national independence which, for me at any rate, began with the 1916 Rising.

During my early days with the Fianna in Waterford city I have a clear recollection of visits paid to us by the late Countess Markievicz, and by Liam Mellows, both of whom talked to us on the principles of nationality and strove to instil in our young minds a love of Ireland and a determination to do all in our power to help our country in her fight for freedom.

My recollection of those Fianna days goes back to 1917-1918 when, in common with about 30 other young lads, I listened to lectures read from British military textbooks on scouting, squad drill and suchlike. These lectures were given by our Vice O/C. Paddy Hearn. I remember well that my great ambition at the time was to be able to purchase for myself a scout's uniform. In addition to the lectures given by Paddy Hearn, we also received training in first aid. At the time there was a ladies auxiliary branch called a "sluagh" attached to the Fianna in Waterford, and it was principally from members of that sluagh we got our first aid training.

I was about twelve months or so in the Fianna when I left to join an organisation known as the 'National Guards'. This body was, so far as I can now remember, started in Waterford city by a man named McHenry who came down from Dublin. He was employed as chef in the Imperial Hotel, Waterford. I am of the opinion that this McHenry had some difference of opinion with Countess Markievicz in Dublin on Fianna matters and that he started this new National Guards organisation in Waterford as a sort of opposition to the Fianna although the objects, of course, were quite the same.

The O/C. of the National Guards in Waterford was McHenry and one of his principal officers was a man named John, nicknamed "Bismarck" Power. There were about 40 members of this organisation in Waterford city, comprising mostly Fianna lads who considered the Fianna too juvenile and who were not considered old enough to join one of the local Irish Volunteer companies. An oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic was administered to each member on his being accepted into the National Guards. A copy of the oath was signed and retained by every member. I regret to say I have not now got the copy of the oath which I signed.

I remained a member of the National Guards organisation for about eight or ten months only as I did not care much for the type of recruits coming in - by this I mean the type from the national point of view - so I returned again to the local Fianna Company.

Sometime about late 1917, being anxious to acquire some guns, plans were formulated by the Fianna to raid the store of arms held by the Irish National Volunteers (John Redmond's Volunteers) and kept in a store attached to the bakehouse owned by a W.J. Smith in George's St., Waterford. There were, approximately, 500 rifles in this store and there was no guard whatsoever placed on it. To us, this seemed a marvellous chance to lay our hands on some weapons which we were very anxious to get hold of. I remember Paddy Hearn, who was second in command of the Fianna, telling us that we should have the approval of the 'heads' of the Irish Volunteers (who had seceded from the National Volunteers) before taking any action. I remember quite well learning that the leaders of the Irish Volunteers refused to agree to the proposed raid, so we in the Fianna did nothing further about the matter. The tragedy of the thing, from our point of view, was, that a very short time after our proposal had been turned down by the Volunteer leader these same guns were handed over to the British military by W.J. Smith, himself, an officer in Redmond's Volunteers.

Still being eager to acquire arms of any sort, we were told by an old man of a quantity of arms and pikes which, he said, were hidden in an old Protestant churchyard at Bishop's Hall, Waterford. We carried out a search one night but found the spot caved in and nothing in it.

During the famous 1918 by-election in Waterford, which was contested by Dr. Vincent White on behalf of Sinn Fein, and Captain William Redmond representing the Irish Parliamentary Party, the Fianna did all the bill-posting and the painting of slogans on walls and footpaths in support of Dr. White. On

On one occasion we did this in the notoriously hostile district of Ballybricken, Waterford, where the infamous pig-buyer crowd lived and who hated anything or anybody who opposed the policy of John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Party in the British House of Commons.

During the course of this bill-posting we were constantly attacked and beaten up by the Ballybricken pig-buyer element, whose chief thug was a strong-arm man by the name of Stephen Long. This man was not himself one of the pig-buyer fraternity but seemed to be well-primed with money and liquor by them to carry out his blackguardly assaults on young lads, as the Fianna were. On one such occasion, when we were beaten up and chased to the Volunteer Hall in Thomas St., Waterford, a Volunteer inside - a New Ross man - got a .32 revolver and went out to tackle the Ballybricken element. Luckily for the latter, they had just left the vicinity of the hall when the incensed New Ross man appeared on the scene.

Usually this bill-posting was done during the night with a Volunteer guard, but we later dispensed with the latter as we found we could carry on much better on our own.

During the 1918 election the Fianna acted as guide to the Volunteers from outside areas who came in to Waterford to help in the election on behalf of Dr. White, the Sinn Féin candidate.

I remember at the same time Eamon de Valera coming to Waterford. He and other men from the Sinn Féin headquarters in Dublin stayed in the Metropole Hotel, Bridge St. Waterford. The Fianna paraded there to welcome him and their flag was captured by the Redmondite mob from Ballybricken and the lads beaten up. The flag was immediately retaken by a unit of Irish Volunteers who, in addition to being assaulted with bricks and bottles by the opposition mob, was also subjected to baton charges by the R.I.C. who invariably supported the

Redmondites in their attacks on republican sympathisers.

On one occasion during the 1918 election, when the ballot boxes were being brought in to the Courthouse for counting of the votes, the R.I.C. surrounded the Volunteer Hall in Thomas St. Waterford, and refused to allow anybody to enter or leave the hall. I was in the hall at the particular time and remember a few rifle shots being fired from a house of a pig-buyer across the street into the Volunteers assembled in the hall. One Volunteer from Mullinavat, Co. Kilkenny, was wounded in the eye. I saw revolvers being produced by some of the Volunteers in the hall that night, but no shots were fired by them, notwithstanding the treatment being meted out to them.

Shortly after the General Election of 1918, I transferred from the Fianna to A/Company, 4th Battalion, East Waterford Brigade, Irish Volunteers. So far as I can recollect, the O/C. was Willie Walsh (the G.A.A. referee). Other prominent members were J.D. Walsh (deceased), Sean Matthews and Peadar Woods. Willie Walsh was a clerk in Messrs. Phelan's sack and bag factory where he still works. There were, to the best of my recollection, about 30 men in the company and about two or three revolvers, but I cannot be certain of that.

At this time I was working in the parcels office of the Great Southern and Western Railway in Ferrybank, Waterford, and took the opportunity of searching the luggage of British army officers passing through Waterford en route to Fermoy Barracks and other military bases down south. These officers were usually returning from the war in France and carried revolvers in their baggage. I am quite sure I must have got at least 20 revolvers in this manner, together with a good quantity of assorted ammunition. The guns were mainly long and short Webleys and a few of the 'bulldog' type. I was assisted in this work by another Volunteer and a railway employee named Sean Brett. In addition to searching luggage

left in the office overnight, a railway platform employee named Duignan used have a quick look through soldiers' kit left lying around for an hour or so. In this manner we collected quite a few German automatic revolvers being brought home as souvenirs of the war by officers and British Tommies. Many a time we whipped the bayonets from rifles as they lay unattended while the Tommies were out of sight, perhaps having a drink in the railway bar. These weapons were all handed up to the late J.D. Walsh who was quartermaster of the city battalion of the Irish Volunteers at that time.

This went on without anybody suspecting that I was involved in the disappearance of military equipment until one day I spotted a British officer getting off a train and leaving his suitcase on the platform under the care of an R.I.C. man. When the officer had gone out of the railway station, the R.I.C. man went to have a meal, and I seized my chance to force the lock of the case and run my hand through the contents. To my great delight I came across a lovely new Smith and Wesson revolver and a pouch of ammunition. With the revolver in my pocket I actually passed the officer on my way to the parcels office where I worked, but I didn't know he was the man whose suitcase I had rifled until a very short while afterwards, when a terrible hullabaloo went up as the officer discovered his loss.

Meanwhile, in the short time at my disposal I hid the revolver and ammunition in 'bays' in the roof of the station. At once a search was carried out by British military. Every nook and cranny they could think of was searched for the missing weapon but to no avail. All the railway staff were closely interrogated, myself, of course, included, but all denied having anything to do with the officer's suitcase. The searching went on for a full week before the military withdrew.

Ab out two weeks later I took the revolver and ammunition

from the hiding place and tried to smuggle it out to my home, but a detective officer named Organ was always on duty there and I couldn't get through with safety. Eventually a railway night-worker named Hennessy brought out the gun and left it in my home. As a result of my being suspected in connection with this revolver incident, I was transferred from Waterford city to Kilmacthomas, Co. Waterford, railway station. The date was about December 1919.

I was about two or three weeks in Kilmacthomas when I made contact with a man named George Kiely, who was a Volunteer in that village. I admitted I had been a member of the Waterford City Battalion and, on hearing this, Kiely told me he, too, was a Volunteer; in fact, he said he was the only one at that particular time in Kilmacthomas.

Shortly after my conversation with Kiely I had an interview with the late Pat Keating (killed in action by British forces at The Burgary, Dungarvan, on 19th March 1921). Pat was commandant of the local battalion at the time. The battalion area covered the districts Comeragh, Kilrossanty, Kilmacthomas, Stradbally and Bonmahon, all in West Waterford, and was known as the 2nd Battalion, West Waterford Brigade. Pat Keating questioned me about the Waterford City I.R.A. officers, presumably to check on my bona fides. He asked me if I could obtain any guns and I told him I had two - the Smith and Wesson revolver previously mentioned by me and a .22 seven-chamber rimfire revolver. I brought these revolvers out to Kilmacthomas and kept them myself, but loaned them out when required.

As regards the strength of the Volunteers in Kilmacthomas then (mid 1920) there was, in fact, no Volunteer company at all in the village, the numbers being too few to form a separate company. The five or six members in the village were considered an outpost of the Kilrossanty Company (Kilrossanty

is about five miles north west of Kilmacthomas). Eddie Power of Kilmacthomas was 1st Lieutenant of this outpost.

Drilling took place in a district called Fevms, about half way between Comeragh and Kilmacthomas. Lectures on firearms were given for which purpose I used bring my two revolvers.

Raiding for arms, which were very scarce with us, took place about the middle of the year 1920. Friendly farmhouses, as well as houses whose occupants were known to be unsympathetic to us, were raided and quite a good number of shotguns and ammunition was collected. These guns were handed over to the Comeragh men whose battalion O/C., the late Pat Keating, lived in Comeragh. It was a simple matter to hide weapons in the mountain area of Comeragh.

The strength of the Kilmacthomas outpost grew to about a dozen men as the year 1920 advanced, six or seven of whom were, to the best of my recollection, armed with revolvers, the remainder with shotguns.

About this period the cutting of telephone wires to disrupt enemy communication began; similarly, the blocking of roads by felling trees. Raids on post offices in the district were carried out by Eddie Power and myself. We were masked (and armed) on these occasions as we were fairly wellknown for miles around Kilmacthomas. The mails were raided to obtain information from letters to or from R.I.C. men or their relatives, which might have some bearing on the strength or movement of the I.R.A. in that district.

I remember also that in 1920, on brigade instructions, a levy was made on farmers in the battalion area. This levy was calculated on the rateable valuation of the holding and was collected by local Volunteers. The money so collected was handed over to a brigade nominee whose name I cannot now recall. I cannot state with truth that this levy was paid up in every

case without a protest; indeed it became necessary at times to threaten certain people who objected to paying up. These people were, usually, those whom we knew were unsympathetic to our cause but, under threat, they paid up.

I, personally, did a little work in 1920 relating to the Dáil Courts which were beginning to operate in West Waterford. I remember bringing men accused of offences to Stradbally, Co. Waterford, eight miles east of Kilmacthomas. The Dáil Court at Stradbally was presided over by a local curate named Father Shine. Men sentenced to imprisonment were sent to 'gaol' and imprisoned in a house situated in the Comeragh Mountains near to the village of Comeragh, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Kilrossanty. Many a night I mounted guard on prisoners there, returning to my work at Kilmacthomas railway station the following morning after handing over guard to some local Volunteers. This house, known as "Scrubs" (or called after Wormwood Scrubbs internment camp in Wales), was often used by the West Waterford Flying Column in their activities, because of its remoteness and inaccessibility.

In August 1920, on the instructions of Eddie Power, seven or eight of us left Kilmacthomas on foot at night and proceeded in the direction of Kill about eight miles distant. I remember being armed with a revolver. We halted about three miles west of the village of Kill, where we set about blocking the road by felling trees and placing farm implements across the road. When we had the job done, the time was about midnight. We remained at our position as instructed for about an hour during which we heard firing and saw Verey lights being fired into the sky in the direction of the village. One of our men then came down the road from Kill and told us the police barracks had been attacked and that we should disperse as the planned attack was over because of the arrival on the scene of a large body of British military. We withdrew as ordered, but I can

definitely state that no military approached Kill from our position; neither did we encounter any enemy forces that night on our way back westward to Kilmacthomas.

In the autumn of 1920, so far as I can remember, I was asked by Eddie Power to go with him to ambush troops expected (from Dungarvan) to raid the house of Ned Power of Glen, Kilmacthomas, a brigade (or battalion) officer. We reached a spot at Kilminnion Bridge which is about eight miles east of Dungarvan and on the coast road, late at night. When we got there, we met the West Waterford Brigade O/C., Pax Whelan, the Vice O/C. George Lennon, and about 15 men armed with rifles. "Nipper" McCarthy was there carrying bombs. Andy Kirwan of Boat Strand, Bonmahon, the column motor driver, together with Ned Power of Glen, the man whose house was to be raided by the British, were also there. I was armed with my own Smith and Wesson revolver and about a dozen rounds of ammunition. Eddie Power and I were placed in position on a height overlooking the bridge on the Dungarvan (west) side. On our left were about five riflemen and others with hand grenades. Andy Kirwan with about six riflemen and shotgun men was in position on a grass covered big rock at the Stradbally (east) side of the bridge. We were all set to give the British a hot reception, but, although we waited until after 2 o'clock in the morning, the enemy didn't turn up and we got orders to disperse.

When Eddie Power and myself reached Kilmacthomas after the abortive attempt at ambush at Kilminnion, we found that the military had been there searching during the night. They had actually brought the inhabitants of the village out on to the street in their night attire. They were looking for Ned Power of Glen, but apparently mixed the name with Eddie Power of Kilmacthomas, and that was why we missed them at Kilminnion Bridge; they had gone to Kilmacthomas in error.

About the same time, George Lennon, Brigade Vice O/C., Mick Shalloe and Jim Pender, all of Dungarvan, sent for me and said we were going to 'have a go' at a military lorry expected to pass through Kilmacthomas. Lennon and Shalloe had grenades to drop into the lorry, but although we waited more than two hours on the railway bridge under which the road ran, no lorry came along.

Sometime early in the year 1921, I remember being called to do armed guard duty in the Comeragh district. It appeared as if something big was on foot, as brigade officers were coming and going all night. I was on guard for two consecutive nights on a house in the Comeragh mountains, but who was there or what was happening I do not know to this day.

It was early in the month of March 1921, when I received instructions to block the main Dungarvan-Waterford road by felling trees. In company with a few local Volunteers, I carried out this task which, I remember, finished at about one o'clock in the morning, after which I returned to Kilmacthomas.

The morning following the blocking of the road, when I was on duty at Kilmacthomas railway station, I was told by the stationmaster that a train had been held up and stopped at Durrow on its journey to Waterford by a party of armed men and that I was to carry out the duties of pilot. This meant that I would have to walk the railway line from Kilmacthomas to Durrow, report for duty to Durrow and verify that the line was clear. I was then to travel up and down on each train between Kilmacthomas and Durrow until such times as the signal lines between the railway cabins had been repaired (these lines had been damaged to disrupt train communications) and the staff instruments put in order.

I left Kilmacthomas in the forenoon and walked along the line until I met the train about six miles to the west. The

The train was stationary and had the fireman only on her engine. The fireman's name was Jack Edwards, afterwards shot in Kilkenny gaol during the civil war. He was a member of one of the Waterford city companies of the I.R.A. The passengers were all sitting along the railway embankment and when I asked Edwards about them he told me these people were mostly jurors on their way to Court in Waterford. Edwards also told me that an ambush was being prepared by our lads in the vicinity of where the train was stopped, in anticipation of British forces coming on the scene, when word reached them of the train hold-up.

I continued along the railway line until I reached Durrow station about another two miles distant, when I was arrested by the officer in charge of a party of British troops who had occupied the station premises a short time before my arrival. He asked me about the train hold-up and I remember telling him that I had only come upon the train in the course of my duties as pilot man and that I had neither seen nor heard of any armed men in the neighbourhood.

The British officer did not seem to be quite satisfied with my story because he, thereupon, ordered me at the point of his revolver to lead the way by a detour across country to the point where the train was held up. As we came closer to the train, the officer compelled me at revolver point to stand up on each ditch as we met it to see if there were armed men around, at the same time warning me that on the first sound of a shot being fired at his men he would shoot me instantly. My position then was an unenviable one. If I refused to climb on a ditch, or if the ambush, which I knew was laid, began, I would certainly have been 'plugged' at once by the British. As I approached the stationary train, the officer spotted the jury men sitting along the embankment and prepared to open fire, thinking the jurors were I.R.A. men. It was only with the greatest difficulty I convinced him that the men were really

jurymen and not, as he imagined, a number of I.R.A. waiting in ambush. Luckily for me, no ambush did occur at that time (about midday) and I was released by the military, whereupon I returned to Kilmacthomas. Some weeks or so afterwards, I learned that one of our lads who had been lying in ambush near Durrow station on the occasion of the train hold-up had seen me walking in advance of the military and, standing up on a ditch. He had trained his rifle on me, but as I came nearer to his position, he recognised me and held his fire. He was very puzzled to know what on earth I was up to and laughed afterwards when I told him of the predicament in which I found myself.

The Saturday prior to the ambush at Ballyvoile, Co. Waterford, which, so far as I can recollect, occurred about the end of April 1921, I received a 'phone message to the railway cabin at Kilmacthomas station to meet the boys at Durrow station and bring all the weapons and ammunition I could lay my hands on. I got my own Smith and Wesson revolver with some ammunition and filled my pockets with an assortment of shotgun cartridges. A man named Skehan of Kilmacthomas drove me in his pony and trap towards Durrow, where we met up with about 10 men from the nearby Stradbally Company. I left my revolver with one of the Stradbally men and drove on to the house of Jack Power of Glen, about two miles from Durrow. Jack told me that military patrols were out all over the area and, on hearing this, I dumped all the ammunition I had behind a stone in a ditch. It was about 9 p.m. now and the night was very dark.

A short distance from Power's house I was halted by military at a crossroads, taken from the pony and trap and searched, as was Skehan the driver. The latter had some drink taken and was in a hilarious mood, which fact was very likely responsible for the military not paying too much attention

to us when I explained we were just "having a night out". However, we were ordered to follow the advance guard of military in the pony and trap. On the way I turned the trap up a narrow lane and, in the darkness of the night, eluded the rearguard of military, who didn't notice what had happened.

With regard to the subsequent engagement at Ballyvoile Bridge in the early hours of the following morning, to the best of my recollection, there were at least 30, if not 40, of our men in position waiting to ambush a cycling patrol of military expected to pass that way. Jack Tobin, vice-comdt. of the 4th (Kilrossanty) Battalion, was in charge. The ambush turned out to be a fiasco. It appears that one of our scouts was seen crossing a road by the military in the early hours of the morning, with the result, that the officer in charge of the British got suspicious, and, as it so happened, did not proceed with his men into the ambush position. Instead, he fired a shot from his revolver to which one of our men replied, thereby giving away our position to the enemy. The latter started an outflanking movement on our men and, being better armed, forced us to retreat. In the encounter which, so far as I can remember, lasted about 20 minutes or so, John Cummins of the Stradbally Company was killed, and John Mansfield of Kilmacthomas wounded. I cannot say what casualties, if any, were suffered by the British.

Shortly after the Ballyvoile engagement I went on a brief holiday to Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick, but I was arrested in Limerick and put in a train with other civilians by a British officer who was taking a regiment on to Tralee. The officer informed us that we were being taken as hostages in case the train was ambushed on its journey to Tralee, and that we would be shot if his troops were attacked en route. No ambush occurred and I was released on arrival in Tralee.

I returned to Kilmacthomas after a week or so, the time being about the end of May 1921, and reported for duty to the railway station. I then learned that a regiment of British troops - the Yorks and Lancashires - had occupied Kilmacthomas Poor Law Union buildings with two field guns as part of their armament. Their patrols were very active in the area, one of which called on me at the railway to inquire my address in Kilmacthomas. Subsequently, soldiers used to call at my 'digs' very frequently at night, sometimes about 9 p.m. and again about midnight to see if I was on the premises. On every occasion they insisted on seeing me in person, to satisfy themselves I was really there.

I put up with this sort of thing for a few weeks when I decided to clear out of Kilmacthomas, give up my job at the railway and join the West Waterford Flying column under Pax Whelan, which was then (June 1921) located on the Comeragh district. I did get to Comeragh and met the column, but as I had at the time only an old shotgun, it was decided that I had better return to the company area and keep things going as best I could there.

I was appointed a full company captain in early June 1921, with Michael Hill, Kilmacthomas, as 1st Lieutenant, and John Kirwan, Fewas, Kilmacthomas, 2nd Lieutenant. The adjutant was a man named Edward Doohan and the quartermaster William Power of Graignarush, Kilmacthomas.

This was the position when the Truce came in July 1921.

During the Truce period I organised billets for a company officers' course in training conducted by Paddy Paul, the brigade training officer for the Waterford Brigade. About 50 men attended at Graignarush just outside Kilmacthomas where the camp was held. Following the course, an examination was held at which I obtained second place. As a result I was

asked to take over the training of the 2nd Battalion (Kilrossanty) Waterford Brigade. I should have stated earlier that sometime in Mid-June 1921, the East and West Waterford Brigades were amalgamated and known as the Waterford Brigade under the command of Pax Whelan, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

Later in the year 1921 - about August or September - I was attached to what was known as the Brigade Maintenance Party. This comprised about 60 to 80 men and was quartered in billets at Ballinacourty, Co. Waterford. This force was used in the maintenance of law and order generally in the brigade area, and was under the command of Paddy Paul, Brigade Training Officer.

Following the evacuation of barracks by British troops and R.I.C. early in January 1922, I took over charge of Portlaw R.I.C. Barracks with a party of men from the 2nd Battalion area and, about the same period, took part in a hold-up of Black and Tans and R.I.C. at Dunkett, Co. Kilkenny, about two miles north of Waterford city on the main Waterford-Kilkenny road.

Information reached us from a friendly Black and Tan that a convoy was proceeding to Gormanston Camp, Co. Meath, for disbandment and that the convoy would consist of about 80 armed R.I.C. and Black and Tans in Crossley tenders with a Lancia armoured car. About 30 of us selected for the job of holding up the convoy were assembled in Ballinacourty, given details of what was to be done and told that on no account were shots to be fired, as it was expected that the job could be carried out without incident, according to what the friendly Black and Tan told us. Besides, the Truce was on and 'no shooting' was the 'order of the day'.

Our party proceeded in motor cars to the appointed place at Dunkett, and placed a barricade across the main road. We then lined the fence at both sides of this barricade and

awaited developments. The convoy came along in due course and stopped at the barricade. We shouted: "Put them up, ye are all covered". A Black and Tan (probably the man who had given us the tip off) shouted: "Stop, boys, they are too many for us". I remember these words quite well. All the men in the convoy dismounted and put up their hands. They put up no opposition.

We seized the Crossley tenders with cases of ammunition, rifles, machine guns, revolvers and grenades. The Lancia armoured car was also taken and all the enemy cars were manned by our own drivers and driven up to Comeragh in the mountains where the captured stuff was carefully hidden. The Black and Tans and R.I.C. were taken in a few tenders to Portlaw where they were told to get out. A van was commandeered by them which they used to get to their destination.

This raid I speak of was, of course, unofficial, but it was considered that such a grand opportunity of getting from the British such a large quantity of weapons and ammunition with such little trouble was something which should not be missed.

When the British evacuated the infantry barracks in Waterford city early in 1922, I was one of the I.R.A. party who took over the barracks where I remained as adjutant until the Free State troops attacked Waterford later in that year. I took part in the defence of Waterford and, after its occupation by the Free State army, I retreated west towards Dungarvan where I served with an active service unit under Thomas Keating of Comeragh, who was killed in the subsequent fighting in Co. Waterford.

This active service unit operated in the area between Dungarvan and Waterford city during which we attacked Tramore Coastguard station with myself in charge whilst the main body of the column attacked a Free State military post at Whitfield

about four miles west of Waterford.

We returned again to Kilrossanty district where we were attacked by vastly superior numbers of Free State troops at Barnakill near Kilrossanty. Following this engagement, Thomas Keating, Jack Tobin of Cappoquin, myself and others of the column attacked troops stationed in Kilmacthomas Workhouse. In the late autumn of 1922, myself and a few of the column were captured in a farmhouse at Ballylinch, about six miles south-west of Kilmacthomas, the date was 15th October 1922.

I was imprisoned in Kilkenny Gaol and was later transferred to Hare Park Internment Camp at the Curragh, Co. Kildare, from where I was released ~~at the 'cease fire'~~ in 1923. *m 4-4-24.*

Signed:

Moses Roche
(Moses Roche)

Date:

17th March 1955

17th March 1955.

Witness:

T. O'Gorman

(T. O'Gorman)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

NO. W.S. 1129